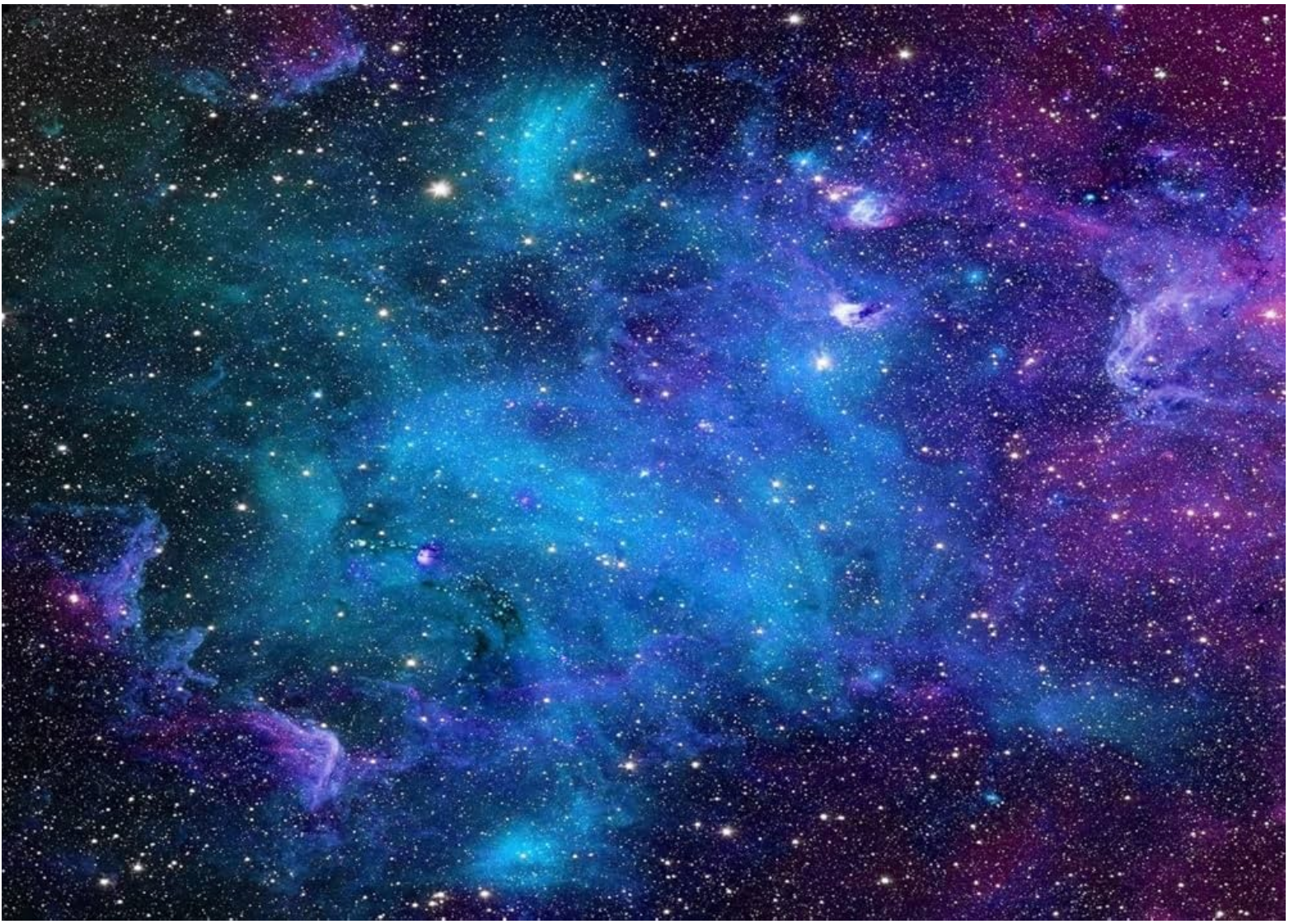

In Search Of God

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1. In Search of “God”

Jdg 17:6 In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

Deu 12:8 Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes. Deu 12:9 For ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which the LORD your God giveth you.

Humans have a capacity for believing what they want, and that belief does not distinguish between the voices calling them in their heads. They will select the voice which suits their agenda best. In fact with the beliefs that people hold, you will see how difficult it is to change their belief. People do not readily accept change, and I wonder if they actually respond to teaching in the church or just stay silent and continue with the thought, “I have my beliefs”. The churches as a result have different beliefs and despite the outward signs of unity, are divided. It makes me wonder what value the teaching ministry actually has, and you can see why sermons have become so banal and childish. Does anyone care what is taught?

The more they age, the more people become intransigent and they become and set in their ways and all the more miserable. No wonder Scripture says*, Ecc 12:1 Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them*.

The necessity of building up a store of Truth in one’s youth is the best way to guard against a depressing old age. That Truth which we hold is not of human origin but of Divine origin, and we must make it clear at the beginning, that anything which cannot be shown to derive itself from the Word of God, in practice, in direction, in its aims and ends, is not to be believed or practiced. It is purely godless fantasy and imagination that comes from rebellion against God.

But can we put a face to this “God” or is He to be a mystery to us all? Well yes we can, *Heb 1:1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Heb 1:2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Heb 1:3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high*;

God has declared Himself in the person of the Son, Jesus, “*the express image of his person”*. He is literally, the “character” = χαρακτήρ, of God. An exact copy.

What God is Christ is, but you can see Jesus clearly in the teachings of the Gospel.

Many people talk about “God” but seldom about JESUS. They are like those people who know “only the Baptism of John” and are in bondage to the law of “Carnal ordinances”, *Heb 9:9 This also has a meaning for today. It shows that we cannot make our consciences clear by offering gifts and sacrifices. Heb 9:10 These rules are merely about such things as eating and drinking and ceremonies for washing ourselves. And rules about physical things will last only until the time comes to change them for something better*. CEV.

Christianity is not to be taken lightly, or taken up and put down as you wish. It requires a total commitment not a half hearted compromise. The duty of all Christians as stated by Jesus, *Mat 28:18 Jesus came to them and said: I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth! Mat 28:19 Go to the people of all nations and make them my disciples. Baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Mat 28:20 and teach them to do everything I have told you. I will be with you always, even until the end of the world*. CEV.

Do you see what it says, “**teach them to do everything I have told you***”*. You do not teach men anything that Jesus did not teach, you only teach the things of Jesus. All disciples have the same task, to make disciples just as Jesus wants. They make disciples, *Eph 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; Eph 4:12 the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ*: The disciples that they make go on to make disciples, “**for the work of the ministry***”*.

The churches have become stagnant, disregarding Jesus’ words to be pro-active with the good news, to becoming passive and non-committal. They gather together in little boxes, inventing things to do, instead of following Jesus teaching. They gather to themselves people who will lead them, and this justifies their position in passive religion. It is this that I want to look at, because it is a complete denial of **Jesus** who will build His church,

Now this verse is a bit difficult to interpret, “thou are Peter”, which could equally be rendered, “thou are a stone”. *Mat 16:17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. Mat 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Mat 16:19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Mat 16:20 Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ*.

Jesus says that Peter is a stone but that He is a rocky crag upon which the church is built. This paraphrased version, the Remedy version, brings out the distinction. *Mat 16:17 Jesus smiled and said: "Well done, Simon, son of Jonah. You did not gain this truth from humans, but from my Father in heaven. Mat 16:18 And though you are Peter—your name meaning small stone—it is on the solid Rock of the Son of Man that I will build my church, and hell's barricade of selfishness and lies will not stop it. Mat 16:19 I will give you the Spirit empowering you with truth and love, which are the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind to truth and love on earth will be bound to truth and love in heaven, and whatever you loose from fear and selfishness on earth will be loosed from fear and selfishness in heaven."* Remedy.

Eph 1:22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Eph 1:23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

The church is not built upon Peter, with all of his infirmities, and to make this point, the very next paragraph details Peter's betrayal of the purpose of Jesus, *Mat 16:22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. Mat 16:23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men*.

Although the church if not built on Peter, he has the keys of the kingdom, *Mat 16:19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven*. What does this mean?

It doesn't mean that Peter exercises favouritism and only lets his friends in the kingdom! It does not mean that he looses plagues upon men and angels, that is not part of the brief to disciple all men. I think that it means, that through the Gospel, heaven is opened or closed to all men, the keys of the kingdom being held by the Gospel.

No church can claim to hold the keys if it does not teach the Gospel of Jesus. So with Peter dead, who has the keys now? I will suggest that anyone teaching the truth of the Gospel is in possession of them. But looking at the institutions which lay claim to being a true church, can we honestly say that this is true?

They adopt God without knowing whether He has adopted them!

2. Why Do We Have So Many Denominations?

You do not have to “join” a church because you are a member of the church by being in a relationship with Jesus, *Heb 12:22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, Heb 12:23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, Heb 12:24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel*.

So then, why do we have so many man-made organisations calling themselves the “church”? I think it is because men are so insecure and weak that they must be backed up by the flesh of man, because they lack the confidence in the Spirit. They gather in like-minded groups and form human associations, but do you know, you do not have to join with any of them. You can just ignore them and let them get on with their “mumbo jumbo”, because we have better things to do!

These people also say that they know “God”, they pray to Him in uncertainty, act out ancient rituals which mean little to the uninitiated, and sing hymns to remind themselves of what they should be doing. But you ask any person who goes to church to show you “God” they cannot. They can of course cite Jesus and His words. That is God’s communication towards us, and we see in this communication that Jesus gives to us, *Mar 16:15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. Mar 16:16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. Mar 16:17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; Mar 16:18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover*. Why do you pray to God when you know what you are to do in Jesus?

Some people, especially “leaders” do not have a clue about what they are doing, like Sarah Mullally who became Archbishop of Canterbury through a process that involved a recommendation from the Prime Minister to the monarch, who then formally approved the appointment. As the third most senior bishop in the Church of England, her appointment on October 3, 2025, followed her prior roles as a priest and then the Bishop of London since 2018. Her previous career as a nurse, culminating in the position of Chief Nursing Officer for England, was cited as a key part of her experience in management and public service. Ordained in 2001.

Sarah Mullally expressed that she is taking up her role as the Archbishop of Canterbury with trust in God to guide her and said she is encouraged by scripture that states, "Though you stumble you shall not fall headlong, for the Lord holds you fast by the hand". She accepts that scripture yet she rejects many others. She has a pick-n-mix faith. Her acceptance of the role was based on prayer and discernment, and she believes God has provided her with the

necessary experience to serve the church (all 20 years of it). She hasn't got a clue and "the blind leading the blind" comes to mind.

- **Trust in God's guidance:**

Mullally stated she accepts the calling with trust in God, not in herself alone, to guide the church. Then why do they need her?

- **Spiritual encouragement:**

She finds encouragement in the psalmist's words that "Though you stumble you shall not fall headlong, for the Lord holds you fast by the hand," which **she believes applies to her** and the church. Why does it apply to her?

- **Discernment process:**

The decision to accept the role was made after a period of self-reflection and prayer, where she **listened to God (I wonder what He said)** to determine **if she had something to offer**. She **feels that God** has provided the experience and opportunities for her to serve in this position at this time. What did she "feel" that God offered her? Self-delusion? Note that she draws her inspiration from the Old Testament not the words of Jesus!

The Church of Nigeria has officially rejected the appointment of Dame Sarah Mullally as the next Archbishop of Canterbury, describing the decision as "devastating" and one that "ignores the current situation". In a statement published on Face book, Archbishop Henry C Ndukuba said the move, which will make her the first female to lead the Anglican Communion, disregarded the convictions of "the majority of Anglicans [who] are unable to embrace female headship in the episcopate". He also expressed concern about Archbishop-designate Sarah's support for same-sex marriage. But these Anglicans from Africa are equally mired in tradition to some extent.

Looking at Mullally's obedience to scriptures and God's revelation of Himself, we examine how the "head" of the Anglican church leads its members. Firstly, we turn too her "dress" and that of the clergy which dress differently to the people and so set up an artificial distinction between people, them and us.

Dress is important, it confers among men status, purely artificial, but some men bow down to it with stupefying adoration, and are swept into a fantasy of their own making. They do not see that these things are epaulettes, badges that people stick upon themselves, to make them different from other men. Feyneman, who I have used to illustrate this, says,

> I don't like honours. I appreciate it for the work that I did, and for people who appreciate it, and I notice that other physicists use my work. I don't *need* anything else. I don't think there's any sense to anything else. I don't see that it makes any point that someone in

> the Swedish Academy decides that this work is noble enough to receive a prize.
>
> I've already got the prize.
>
> The prize is the pleasure of finding the thing out, the kick in the discovery, the observation that other people use it. Those are the real things. The honours are unreal to me. I don't believe in honours. It bothers me; honours bother me. Honours is epaulettes; honours is uniforms. My poppa brought me up this way. I can't stand it; it hurts me.
>
> When I was in high school, one of the first honours I got was to be a member of the Arista, which is a group of kids who got good grades. Everybody wanted to be a member of the Arista. And when I got into the Arista, I discovered that what they did in their meetings was to sit around to discuss who else was worthy to join this wonderful group that we are. So we sat around trying to decide who it was who would get to be allowed into this Arista. This kind of thing bothers me psychologically for one or another reason I don't understand myself. Honours — and from that day to this — always bothered me.
>
> I had trouble when I became a member of the National Academy of Science, and I had ultimately to resign. Because there was another organization, most of whose time was spent in choosing who was illustrious enough to be allowed to join us in our organization. Including such questions as 'We physicists have to stick together, because there's a very good chemist that they're trying to get in, and we haven't got enough room for so-and-so.' What's the matter with chemists? The whole thing was rotten, because the purpose was mostly to decide who could have this honour.

It is an illustration of the non-importance of dress to give form to the individual, but unfortunately, Feynman did not believe in God. The Anglican church does not even consider the implications of their tradition of dressing up. Not only is it not required, it is a denial of the state of Creation. It is an evolutionary view of man.

Let me explain. At Creation there was no distinction between Heaven and Earth, that is, the place where God dwells, but there is a difference between the physical Earth and the physical Heavens. The state of Adam and Eve was no different from the angels and they appeared to enjoy the same privileges. They were also naked as we suppose the angels were. Christ was also naked in His death and in His resurrection, leaving the bindings of His grave clothes behind.

When they sinned, our first parents were ejected from the garden, the tie with heaven was broken. Clothing came into being because of sin, to cover transgressions, it was not secular in origin but religious. Man does not see that and attempts to make himself grand, and loses the first meaning and moves

towards making himself God. *Jud 1:6 And angels who had not kept their own original state, but had abandoned their own dwelling, he keeps in eternal chains under gloomy darkness, to the judgment of the great day; Jud 1:7 as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities around them, committing greedily fornication, in like manner with them, and going after other flesh, lie there as an example, undergoing the judgment of eternal fire.*

We were designed and built without clothing. There is nothing in the New Testament which enables you to distinguish between Paul and the lowliest disciple, and this state of affairs lasted for the early centuries of Christianity. Then a change came with many churches adopting clerical dress, which they do not even question nowadays.

The authority of these churches, does, as Feynman's dad said, reside in the dress, the uniform, and the epaulettes. Without this they are nothing. So the more flamboyant the dress, the more people are taken in by the deceit, and the less the person in the ministry has to show competence. Dress replaces ability.

3. Clothes Make the Man

What one wears is taken by others as an essential signal of status. The proverb is recorded in English from the early 15th century, but an earlier saying in classical Greek is, **'the man is his clothing'**.

"Clothes make the man. Naked people have little or no influence on society," said Mark Twain. You can see this in the fall of Andrew Mountbatten. Stripped of all his finery he is nothing, and that is the same for every man, *1Ti 6:7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out*. It is the same for all people who dress up in the name of religion, they are nothing without their robes, and it is unfortunate that we give them the credibility by allowing them to dress up.

When they die, as when they are born, they are all equal, *Rev 20:11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. Rev 20:12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works*. Small and great, all are taken before the throne and there is no escape. Kings, Queens, princes, popes, archbishops, bishops, ordinary men, beggars, they shall all be treated equally the same.

So why do people dress up? I remember some years ago, a Rev "so and so", was having a go at the Pope for dressings up. I wrote to this hypocrite, and I asked him why he used to term REV to describe him. He said it was to give him

standing in the community. He had to have an artificial, non-biblical title, because he lacked authority. He was naked! Men dress up because they lack authority.

It is one of the many things that mankind does not understand concerning Biblical worship. But hold on a minute, “worship”?

Worship is the act of honouring a divine being or power with reverence, adoration, and devotion. It can also mean showing extravagant respect or admiration for a person or thing. Acts of worship vary widely and can include singing, prayer, meditation, dancing, and other rituals, and are often expressed through a combination of individual and communal religious practices. Is that so? Well have to look and break down the following topics Biblically. If you don’t use your Bibles then you will just be perpetrating errors and prejudice.

Some of our subjects are, worship, holiness and what is holy, religious services, direction of expression (to God or man), who is involved in the assembly, church buildings or just people, singing and the rise of the “performance”, song overtaking mutual service, liturgy or free expression in speech, pastors, sermons and one man performances, temple terminology, is the Lord’s supper a real sacrifice, priests or ministers, clergy and laity, etc.

Making a start, we first make a point in the difference between Old Testament and New Testament forms of practice. In the Old Testament the word rendered “worship” has no real cognate in the Bible. The word most used is in the Greek is *προσκυνέω*, meaning to kiss toward, bow down, to do homage. It conveys a physical act of prostration or kneeling to show reverence, submission, or respect. To give you an idea of what they are doing, look at Islam. A mosque is an Islamic place of worship for Muslims, also known as a **masjid**, which means "place of prostration". Muslims gather there for prayer, to celebrate festivals, and for community activities and study. When they “worship” they are prostrating themselves before a deity in respect. Strangely, Christians who say that they worship God do not take a posture of submission.

These verses are of interest, *Joh 4:20 Our fathers worshipped **προσεκυνησαν** in this mountain; and ye say, that in **Jerusalem** is the place where men ought to worship προσκυνειν. Joh 4:21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye **shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem**, worship **προσκυνησετε** the Father. Joh 4:22 Ye worship **προσκυνειτε** ye know not what: we know what we worship **προσκυνουμεν**: for salvation is of the Jews. Joh 4:23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship προσκυνηται **προσκυνησουσιν** the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship **προσκυνουντας** him. Joh 4:24 God is a Spirit:*

and they that worship ***προσκυνουντας*** *him must worship προσκυνειν him in spirit and in truth*.

Joh 4:21 Jesus saith to her: Woman, believe me that the hour cometh, when you shall neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, ***adore*** *the Father*. DRB

That is how the people showed respect to the Lord. There were of course other obligations that the people had to do, all VERTICAL, God ward duties. ***Letourgia (λειτουργία)****:* A related term meaning "service" or "ministry," associated with both financial gifts and religious service by the priests, and **latreuo (λατρεύω) by people**. Both words have been hidden by the term "worship".

The priests ministered before the Lord, inside the Tabernacle/Temple precincts continually, day and night, and the High Priest, *Heb 5:1 For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men* ***in things pertaining to God****, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins*: Duties involved, daily sacrifice, service inside the Tabernacle/Temple, offerings brought by the people among other things. They must have stunk of blood, guts and offal, covered in the blood of sacrifice, with short periods of respite inside the Tabernacle/Temple. These activities were directed God ward.

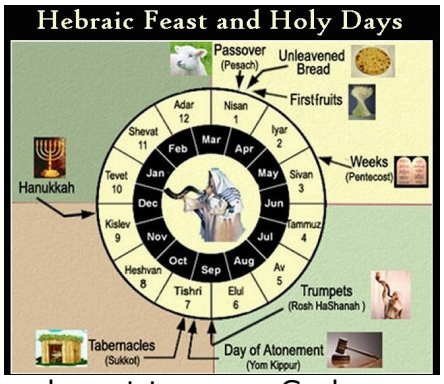
The people, outside of the Levite tribe, were told what sacrifices were necessary for sin. They bought these offerings to the entrance of the Tabernacle/Temple but did not enter the precinct, *Lev 1:3 If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD. Lev 1:4 And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. Lev 1:5 And he shall kill the bullock before the LORD: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. Lev 1:6 And he shall flay the burnt offering, and cut it into his pieces. Lev 1:7 And the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire upon the altar, and lay the wood in order upon the fire:*

This and many types of sacrifice were offered at the door of the Tabernacle, and this too was ministry directed toward God, vertically.

The service centred around the focal point, the Tabernacle/Temple which eventually comprised Jerusalem. It was the cult centre of Temple worship because it was House where God has His name, but during the wilderness years, *Deu 12:10 But* ***when ye go over Jordan****, and dwell in the land which the LORD your God giveth you to inherit, and when he giveth you rest from all your enemies round about, so that ye dwell in safety; Deu 12:11 Then there shall be a place which the LORD your God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there; thither shall ye bring all that I command you; your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the LORD: Deu 12:12 And ye shall rejoice before the*

LORD your God, ye, and your sons, and your daughters, and your menservants, and your maidservants, and the Levite that is within your gates; forasmuch as he hath no part nor inheritance with you. Deu 12:13 ***Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest:*** *Deu 12:14 But in the place which the LORD shall choose in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, and there thou shalt do all that I command thee.*

This corporate service occurred three times a year, *Exo 23:14 Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year. Exo 23:15 Thou shalt keep* ***the feast of unleavened bread****: (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty :) Exo 23:16 And* ***the feast of harvest, the firstfruits*** *of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and* ***the feast of ingatherin****g, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field. Exo 23:17 Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord GOD.*



They met **3 TIMES A YEAR**. Not weekly, not regularly, but only a limited number of times regulated by an agricultural calendar. They knew when it was celebration time by the harvests, and they downed tools and went to serve God. They did not have a weekly time of meeting, only these three feasts, but the priests kept serving God day and night continually. This service was vertical and directed toward God.

What did the Israelite do regularly and who was it that ordered this?

4. Types of Christ

Some of you dismiss the Old Testament by confidently saying that it all signifies Jesus, and like someone who has gotten hold the answers to an examination, writes down the answer without thinking how they derived it. Well, I do not think if you were an ordinary Jewish citizen, you would have known much or anything about Him 1500 years BEFORE His birth! So try if you can, to put yourself in those days, and be as a 15 century BC Jew, and explore the world around you, not what you think it was like, but as it was described in Holy writings, in its simplicity. I am not saying that you should ever forget Jesus, but please leave Him out of your story for the time being. If you are to understand these descriptions, don't complicate them.

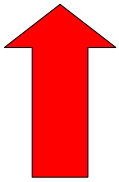
I asked you last time, "**What did the Israelite do regularly in religious devotion and who was it that ordered this**? What was your answer? I think

that it was the Sabbath, *Exo 20:8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Exo 20:9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: Exo 20:10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it* ***thou shalt not do any work****, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: Exo 20:11* ***For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day****: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it*.

It carried the death penalty for openly breaking it, *Exo 31:14 Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Exo 31:15 Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD: whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death*. You knew by this that the Lord took the matter very seriously!

Have you ever fasted for a day? I have and it's not surprising that after a few hours, the mind wanders and you start thinking about food. Keeping the task before you and you begin to see that you are doing it as a self-discipline not because it is a delight. But the Sabbath was to be a delight, *Isa 58:13 If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Isa 58:14 Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.*

On this day of the week, man devoted himself to God. There was no work, there was no "church" service, there was no command to go anywhere, you just stayed where you lived (an early form of assembly in your house) and there you served. The Scripture also says that you humbled your souls, *Lev 16:31 This shall be to you a most holy sabbath, a rest, and ye shall humble your souls; it is a perpetual ordinance*. Brenton. This was an activity directed to God.



The Sabbath was also a reminder of the creation, *Exo 20:11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.* The day was also singled out as a Holy day. So to recapitulate, There were duties that fell to the Levites, duties that fell to the people, individual regular duties (Sabbath), seat feasts, and a Tabernacle/Temple of which the focused as the "dwelling place" of God. All of this activity was directed upwards, to heaven, to God.

This was the outward service to God, yet it was not arbitrary. I believe that it had a much higher and greater purpose, overarching what was seen. It was a shadow of good things to come, *Col 2:16 So don't let anyone make rules for you about eating and drinking or about Jewish customs (festivals, New Moon celebrations,*

or Sabbath days). Col 2:17 In the past these things were like a shadow that showed what was coming. But the new things that were coming are found in Christ. ERV.

We find the meaning of service in Christ. All these ordinances of the Old Testament were like shadows, but the reality casting them was Christ, in front of the shadows of the law was Christ. There were the ceremonial aspects of the law, and above them there was Christ. This took a while to see.

Whether the Jews knew this or not, none-the-less, Christ was in plain sight, albeit as a shadow. Some of the items are, The Mercy seat and the Cherubim, The Table of Shewbread, The Lampstand, The Curtains of the Tabernacle, The Boards, The Bars, The Vail, The Brazen Altar, The Court of the Tabernacle, The Hangings of the Court, The Golden Altar of Incense, The Laver and its Foot, etc,.

For example, *Rom 3:24 being justified freely by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; Rom 3:25* ***whom God has set forth a mercy-seat ιλαστηριον****, through faith in his blood, for the shewing forth of his righteousness, in respect of the passing by the sins that had taken place before, through the forbearance of God; Rom 3:26 for the shewing forth of his righteousness in the present time, so that he should be just, and justify him that is of the faith of Jesus*. Darby. This shows that Christ was the object shown in the Old Testament. Likewise, Heb 10:19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, *Heb 10:20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us,* ***through the veil, that is to say, his flesh****; Heb 10:21 And having an high priest over the house of God; Heb 10:22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water*.

The Tabernacle/Temple had a progression from the base aspects of sin offerings at the doors of the Tabernacle, to the priestly offerings at the altar of burnt offering, into the calm of the Tabernacle and the service of the sanctuary, and finally into the Holy of Holies and the presence of God. The last object, the veil, was the symbol of Christ's flesh. When Christ died, His flesh was torn, and in parallel with this so was the veil. Torn from top to bottom it now showed the way to God was open. I doubt many saw this future truth.

Now we enter the territory of the New Testament. What does God want His people to do? We note that they are Jews and proselytes, *Act 2:8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Act 2:9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Act 2:10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome,* ***Jews and proselytes,*** *Act 2:11 Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God*. Initially there is not a **Gentile** among them!

The gospel went to the Gentiles around 40 A.D., beginning with the conversion of Cornelius, a Roman centurion, as recorded in the biblical book of Acts. This event was followed by the admission of Gentile members into the church in Antioch and later, the widespread ministry of the Apostle Paul throughout the Roman Empire. So it was about 7 years before the gentiles were evangelised. This gave the Jewish population ample time to accept or reject the Gospel.

There was no earthly priesthood in this new congregation except the priesthood of believers, *1Pe 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: 1Pe 2:10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.*

There were no earthly sacrifices, although there were spiritual sacrifices, *1Pe 2:5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ*. Most of the ministry was NOT vertical, to God, but HORIZONTAL towards other believers, *1Co 14:26 How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying*.

The believers were there to "edify" one another. It is a word composed of two parts, οἰκοδομή, oikos meaning a house on doma, meaning to build. It's building a house, *1Pe 2:5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ*. We shall come to the subjects of praise, services to God, sermons etc, and see whether they have any place in the New Testament, but for now, I concentrate on this subject of edification.

There are those who absent themselves from other believers, and the live in isolation. They are not concerned about whether they build up or not. They are selfish individuals, with no focus on the New Testament, no concern for their fellow Christians and they will be empty handed before the judgement seat of Christ. I know a lot of people like this and it's hard to call them Christians.

Do we take the words of Paul seriously or do we make him a liar? Do we consciously seek, ask the Father, to show us how we can build one another up, *Rom 15:14 And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also* ***to admonish one another***. That word admonish is νουθετέω, where we get nouthetic counselling from, and it means to put in mind. Well, do you? Or do you just sit there and let the world go by without doing anything?

I need this correction as much as anybody, but I am not going to get it if you, the brethren, do not give it. Who is going to admonish me? Why isn't done? *Col*

3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and ***admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs****, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*

The problem lies in an unwillingness to become involved, *Heb 5:11 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. Heb 5:12 For when for the time* ***ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you*** *again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. Heb 5:13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.*

5. Churches

The Scripture says, *Act 7:37 This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear. Act 7:38* ***This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness*** *with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us: Act 7:39 To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt*, Darby translates it, *Act 7:38 This is he who was in* ***the assembly in the wilderness****, with the angel who spoke to him in the mount Sinai, and with our fathers; who received living oracles to give to us*.

The word "church" is ἐκκλησία, meaning a *calling out*, a popular *meeting*, especially a religious *congregation,* or assembly. It never means a building, but it does mean an assembly of people. And there the definition held for 3 centuries after Christ until the rise of the State church.

Where did they meet? They met in their houses, *Rom 16:5 Likewise greet* ***the church that is in their house****. Salute my wellbeloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ……. 1Co 16:19 7 The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with* ***the church that is in their house****…… Col 4:15 Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and* ***the church which is in his house***. The church IN their house does not mean that their house had inside of it a special building called a church. Inside the house resided **the assembly** of God's people.

It was in about 3 A.D. that purpose built church buildings were adopted as shown by examples in Dura Europa and Syria. Up till that time, the building they met together in was just the domestic dwelling.

The secular state church building became the substitute for the assembly of God's people. A brick building became a substitute for flesh and blood. This lifeless monster grew into a "jewellery" box of worldly delights, covering the

walls, greatly admired by the people, but whose meaning is lost in time. The people also adopted Temple terminology to describe the church building, making it on par with the Old Testament temple. It is called the House of God, the Holy place, House of worship, Sanctuary etc,. Yet none of those terms are applied in the New Testament to the assembly as an earthly body.

How big were these churches, and how big should they be? If all in the church participate in the activities of edification, then that must be a constraint on the size of the church. Too large an assembly and the ministry would go on for days. I suggest an optimum maximum is 12 persons. I get this figure from the example of the Lord and His band of disciples, it was a manageable group for questions, answers and discussions.

There is always a desire to grow numerically, it is a sign among men of success, but true service is to God, not men. Does it matter whether you have large numbers, surely it's the faithfulness of the servant that counts? And if the numbers grow, then you form another group, and another. Like bacterium they split and multiply. The danger with unchecked unicellular growth is that you eventually stagnate and do not grow any more, and it becomes like a cancer. The mega church is a modern phenomenon, but did not exist in times past.

How should you place people in a house church? They should be placed so that they can clearly hear each other and see each other, not see the back of some ones head as we have in the pews facing the preacher. This leads to isolation, and there is little fellowship among the congregation. But whatever forms you adopt, the main thing is to enable building up one another.

I go back and reiterate again, the TEMPLE worship is not the standard of devotion for the "church/assembly", *Mat 24:1 And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. Mat 24:2 And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things?* ***verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down****.* Our Lord emphasised that fact when He had the Temple of Herod finally destroyed by the legions of Titus in 70 AD. It was flattened along with the city of Jerusalem, and it did not figure in Jewish/Christian worship thereafter. The Temple was Old Testament worship and there it stayed, in the Old Testament

It was 300 years later, with the rise of the Constantinian State church and service that things started to change. Instead of a table at which the Lord's death and resurrection was celebrated, an altar had replaced it and a pseudo-sacrifice was taking place. Gradually the building became Holy and people treated it differently and behaved differently in it.

The purpose of the New Testament assembly was to build up one another, horizontal service. *1Co 14:26 What is it then, brethren? whenever ye come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation.* ***Let all things be done to***

edification*…….Rom 14:19 So then let us pursue the things which tend to peace, and things whereby* ***one shall build up another****……Eph 4:16 from whom the whole body, fitted together, and connected by every joint of supply, according to the working in its measure of each one part, works for itself the* ***increase of the body to its self-building up in love*** *……..1Th 5:9 For God did not make us to let us go and be separated from him, but to be his—united to him in love through our Lord Jesus Christ 1Th 5:10 who died to heal and restore us, so that those who are currently alive and those asleep in death will live together with him. 1Th 5:11 Build each other up and continue encouraging each other with this truth, as you are already doing. Remedy.*

In the Old Testament, people did good to their neighbour but edification of others lapsed in favour of self-serving, *Luk 10:30 And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Luk 10:31 And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Luk 10:32 And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side*.

Service was more towards God than their fellow beings. Getting right with God was a struggle, and dong what was right became an obsession. How could you get right with God when you could not really see Him. The people did right in their own eyes.

The other problem was that the people of the Old Testament never truly got rid of the guilt of sin, *Heb 10:1 The script (also known as "the Law of Moses") was only a shadow—a stage play, a symbolic acting out—of the wonderful joys, blessings, health and happiness that are coming; it was not reality itself. This is why the law—the symbolic system—can never, by the repeated rituals year after year, perfectly heal and restore those who practice its rites. Heb 10:2 If animal sacrifices could somehow actually heal and restore the worshiper to Godlikeness of character, then would not the sacrifices ceased to be offered, for everyone would have been healed, and there would have been no more sickness of heart or mind to remove? Heb 10:3 Instead, the animal sacrifices were annual reminders of our sick and dying condition, Heb 10:4 as it is impossible for the death of bulls and goats to heal our hearts and minds and restore us to Christlikeness.* Remedy.

The New Testament assembly was freed from the repetitive tasks that gave the people no respite from the continual sacrifice. As Paul said, *Rom 7:6 But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that* ***we should serve in newness of spirit****, and not in the oldness of the letter*. Free at last, they could concentrate on their task of building up and sanctifying on another.

The opportunity to do this was given to all Christians, not some Christians. What are we to think of those who call themselves Christians, who take little or no

interest in doing this? They are a shame and a disgrace to the Name of Christ. They have no interest in the truth, and would rather go back to empty, repetitive rituals. The day will declare them.

6. Holiness

What is Holiness?
The Hebrew and Greek words for Holiness (qodesh and hagios) both mean to be set apart from the common or profane and dedicated to God. It is considered an essential attribute of God, who is seen as utterly separate and morally pure. For people, holiness involves being set apart from sin to be more like God.

Exo 3:4 And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. Exo 3:5 And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is ***holy*** קֹדֶשׁ *ground.*

I the Old Testament Qôdesh is consecrated (thing), dedicated (thing), hallowed (thing). *Gen 2:3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.*

In the New Testament, *Rom 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice,* ***holy ἅγιος****, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.* It means sacred (physically pure, morally blameless or religious, ceremonially consecrated), (most) holy (one, thing), saint.

Holiness is the quality or state of being holy, which generally means being set apart, sacred, or dedicated to a divine purpose. It signifies moral purity, separation from sin, and a deep reverence for God or sacred things. In a religious context, holiness can also refer to spiritual perfection.

It is the quality of sanctity or sacredness. The term is also associated with the Holiness movement, a Christian movement that emerged in the 19th century, which teaches that a born-again Christian should be free of sin. According to the Bible, **God is the one who makes you holy**. This is a process of sanctification where God sets individuals apart, purifies them from sin, and empowers them to live a holy life, primarily through his son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. This Divine process involves obedience to God's will and a commitment to living in a Christ like manner.

How God makes you holy.

God actively works in your life to purify and consecrate you, removing impurity and making you more like Christ. Making a commitment to Jesus is considered the first step, as He is the way to holiness. His sacrificial death on the cross provides the righteous basis for the cleansing and acceptance you receive from God. The Holy Spirit plays a crucial role in transforming believers by empowering them for holy living and changing their nature to be more Christ like. This is a continuous process of sanctification.

What it means to be holy.
A key aspect of becoming holy is responding to God's will with obedience, which is seen as an act of love and a way to live in alignment with Him.

It means being set apart from the world for a specific purpose and for God's glory. The process of becoming holy involves growing to be more and more like Christ. Holiness is not a one-time event, but a continuous journey of being transformed and purified.

In both the Old and New Testaments, holiness means being set apart for God, but **the New Testament emphasizes an internal, heart-focused holiness through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit**, while **the Old Testament focused more on external, ritualistic separation and the Law**.

The **Old Testament's system**, with its priests, sacrifices, and dietary laws, created a physical separation from the world to prepare the way for future spiritual redemption.

The **New Testament**, through Jesus' sacrifice, provides a new covenant that consecrates believers internally, making them a "holy temple" where God's Spirit resides, and calling them to live out that holiness in all aspects of life, embodying justice and love.

Old Testament Holiness.
Holiness was achieved through specific rituals, laws, and a separation from the profane and unclean. Priests underwent specific consecration rituals, and the people followed laws regarding diet, cleanliness, and worship, all designed to create physical separation from the world. The Law was given to Israel to set it apart as a holy nation, distinct from surrounding nations.

Breaking the laws of holiness could lead to ritual impurity and separation from God's presence, requiring sacrifices for atonement. While the focus was external, the Old Testament also included calls for a sincere heart and an understanding of internal transformation, such as in the prophetic call for a new heart.

New Testament Holiness.
Holiness now reaches the heart and is not limited to external actions or rituals. The Holy Spirit's presence inside believers is what makes them holy and gives

them the ability to live a holy life. Jesus' sacrifice fulfils the Old Testament sacrificial system, providing a single, complete atonement for sin and making believers holy in God's eyes through a new covenant.

Christians are "saints," a new identity that signifies they belong to God and are set apart for divine use. This new identity calls for an internal change that must be expressed in all aspects of life, including embodying justice, peace, and love for others, as described in Old Testament commands like those found i*n Lev 19:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Lev 19:2 Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy.* It is not just a state of being but a way of life that should be "contagious," transforming an individual's character and actions from the inside out.

Pharisaism and Christianity, holiness and hypocrisy are some of the contrasting aspects of religious lives. We seem too ready to accept at face value the "disguise" a person puts up, and because they say they are a "Christian" we accept it as true, but this is where we lack discernment. We should examine carefully the lives of people for holiness.

Lev 19:2 Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy.....1Co 3:16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? 1Co 3:17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

The company we keep defines us. *2Co 6:14 Be* ***ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness****? and what communion hath light with darkness? 2Co 6:15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 2Co 6:16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 2Co 6:17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, 2Co 6:18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty*.

Are you being "Holy" when you let the company you keep define the narrative, and put your faith aside or are you always ready to hold to God's Holy word, *2Ti 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 2Ti 3:17 That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.*

7. Religious Services

One of the definitions of a religious service is,

> A religious service is a communal gathering for worship, with common elements including singing, prayer, readings, and sermons, tailored to the specific traditions of the faith. These can range from formal, structured services like a Christian Mass or a Jewish Shabbat service, to more informal meetings or practices like Buddhist meditation. The purpose is to connect with the sacred, express praise, give thanks, and foster a sense of community.

We should also remind ourselves that there is a difference between Old Testament and New Testament worship. The focus of the Old Testament was God and the focus of the New Testament was in the assembly itself.

In the New Testament we find our place in the "heavenlies" not on earth, *Heb 12:21 And Moses, seeing the rebelliousness and hardness of the people, was so terrified that they would ignore God's warning, that he said, "I tremble with fear." Heb 12:22 But* ***you have come*** *into the reality (of which the symbols only pointed to), to Mount Zion, the New Jerusalem —the heavenly city of the living God—and you are part of that city. You have come to join millions upon millions of angels rejoicing in God's presence, Heb 12:23 into the heavenly sanctuary—* ***the true church of Christ****—whose identities are stored in heaven. You have come to God —the source and standard of righteousness for all people; to the archived individualities of righteous human beings perfectly restored into Christlikeness of character; Heb 12:24 to Jesus—the conduit and administrator of God's healing plan; and to the reality of God's true nature and character, which was much more potently revealed and disseminated when Christ died than in the symbols offered by Abel*. Remedy.

That clearly states that you do not go to heaven when you die, but that you are already there by the grace of God in Christ Jesus. You serve in **the TRUE church** of Christ in heaven not on the earth. How did you get there?

You got there by being "born again" or rather "born from above", *Joh 3:3 Jesus answered and said to him, 'Verily, verily, I say to thee, If any one may not be born from above* ***ἄνωθεν****, he is not able to see the reign of God;' Joh 3:4 Nicodemus saith unto him, 'How is a man able to be born, being old? is he able into the womb of his mother a second time to enter, and to be born?' Joh 3:5 Jesus answered, 'Verily, verily, I say to thee, If any one may not be born of water, and the Spirit, he is not able to enter into the reign of God; Joh 3:6 that which hath been born of the flesh is flesh, and that which hath been born of the Spirit is spirit. Joh 3:7 'Thou mayest not wonder that I said to thee, It behoveth you to be born from above* ***ἄνωθεν****;* YLT.

Ανωθεν means from above; by analogy from the first; by implication anew, from above, again, from the beginning (very first), the top. It is a top down birth, not a bottom up birth, a birth that occurs from below. It is a spiritual birth.

If you are "in Christ" your ties with the earth are broken, *Col 3:1 If ye then be risen with Christ, **seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God**. Col 3:2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. Col 3:3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. Col 3:4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Col 3:5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry*:

We are not earthly creatures and we, in consequence, do not serve God in the same earthly way. We found Jesus in Heaven, not earth. Don't you remember? Where do you think that you found Jesus? Jesus ascended into heaven, *Act 1:11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, **shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven***.

Like Nicodemus, we just do not know a thing about heaven, *Joh 3:1 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: Joh 3:2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Joh 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.....Joh 3:10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? Joh 3:11 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. Joh 3:12 **If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not**, **how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things**?*

In fact God does not need serving with anything, *Act 17:24 God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Act 17:25 Neither is worshipped **θεραπεύω** with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things*. θεραπεύω = therapeuō, means to wait upon menially, that is, (figuratively) to adore (God), or (specifically) to relieve (of disease), cure, heal, worship.

So where do we wait upon God in the New Testament?

"Waiting on the Lord" means actively trusting in God, seeking His presence and guidance, and being prepared for His timing, rather than passively waiting. It involves prayer, meditation on scripture, and a confident expectation that God will act and provide, even when circumstances are uncertain

In Acts, *Act 13:1 Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. Act 13:2 As* ***they ministered λειτουργέω, to the Lord****, and* ***fasted****, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. Act 13:3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away*. There were only a limited number of prophets and teachers, and this was not “worship”, it was a request of God. They followed a strict regime as they made their request, and the Lord answered them. It was service to the Lord, to make the choice for them.

I don’t find that “worship” in the Old Testament is carried through to the New Testament. What is the main difference? The main difference is the **promise-fulfilment relationship** between the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament is seen as the foundation, with prophecies and laws that foreshadow and are fulfilled in the New Testament's focus on Jesus Christ. While the Old Testament establishes the law and covenant with Israel, the New Testament builds on this by revealing a new covenant in Christ that extends to all believers, regardless of ethnicity.

	Old Testament	**New Testament**
Central Focus	The history of Israel, the Law, and promises of a future Messiah.	The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the founding of the Church.
Relationship to Law	Establishes the Law, showing humanity's need for salvation, though it is not the means of salvation itself.	Fulfils the Law through faith in Jesus, offering salvation as a gift.
Covenant	The Old Covenant made with the Israelites.	The New Covenant in Christ, which is open to all believers.
People	Primarily focuses on the ethnic people of Israel.	Expands to include a global, multi-ethnic Church.
Interpretation Principle	A historical and legal text, often interpreted as a foreshadowing of Christ.	An interpretive text that clarifies the meaning of the Old Testament through Christ's life and ministry.
The	A prediction of a coming saviour	A celebration of the Messiah's

Message	and a glimpse of God's justice and grace.	arrival and an emphasis on God's grace towards sinners

All true, but that doesn't make it very clear. We may simplify it to two "vectors". They relate to the direction of service.

The Old Testament is vertical, to God. The New Testament is horizontal, to believers.

8. Religious Services (Antediluvian)

Now put yourself back to that time as a Jew, delivered from 100's of years of bondage from Egypt, from daily servitude, week in week out, to being set free. They were free from one master, but in service to another, the Lord. They were not freed to go their own way. From every man doing that which was right in his own eyes, it went to all doing what the Lord said. **But it did not start there** in ancient Egypt. *Gen 3:20 And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living. Gen 3:21 Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them. Gen 3:22 And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Gen 3:23 Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. Gen 3:24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.*

There were at least 2,000 years before the flood of Noah when men worshipped, but little is spoken of those times. It wasn't just the fall and Eden, there is a story that covers the time when men were deciding whether they would come in line with God or not.

After the "fall", there appears continuation of worship but it is not well defined to us. We do not know how many people there were, the scope of their worship, or who participated. It is all lost in the mists of that time. What we do see clearly is the worship of two men, brothers, Cain and Abel, who have distinctive reasons

for worship. One offers a living sacrifice as an act of worship, the other offers material gleaned from the ground. How they knew what would be acceptable, by what criterion, is not known.

Gen 4:2 And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. Gen 4:3 And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. Gen 4:4 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. ***And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering****: Gen 4:5 But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. Gen 4:6 And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? Gen 4:7 If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him*.

Did Abel intuitively know what to offer? Had the brothers discussed worship and offerings? Did they know the will of God or just guess it? A clue may lie in the story of the "fall", *Gen 3:7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and* ***they sewed fig leaves together****, and made themselves aprons…….Gen 3:21 Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God* ***make coats of skins****, and clothed them.*

There were two forms of sacrifice. One from the ground, and the other a living blood sacrifice. We should not make a meal of what was going on here, for it is quite simple, one sacrifice was copying Adam's attempt to cover his guilt at sinning, Cain's sacrifice, (which was disregarded by the Lord), by making loin cloths of leaves. This shows how little Adam and Eve thought about the great sin that they had committed. They trivialised it!

The other was the sacrifice which God made in killing animals, and copied by Abel, *Gen 3:21 Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God* ***make coats of sk****ins, and clothed them.* It really grated with Cain, so much so that he was angered enough to kill him. All sacrifice has this important element in it, namely whether it is a blood sacrifice or not.

Right from the beginning, worship and service was never about what elaborate ritual you could develop or invent to praise God. What fancy offering you could find in the field that might please God. It was simply, whether you reflected Christ, the Lamb of God slain for your sin, admitting your guilt, or whether you just by-passed it in your complacency and self righteousness, and presumed, as so many of us do, that we are right with God.

This is the basis of all religion. **Christ and His blood, contrast with self righteousness and no blood.** When the assembly in the New Testament gathered, it was for the purpose of honouring the death of Christ, *1Co 11:23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord*

*Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: 1Co 11:24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. 1Co 11:25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. 1Co 11:26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he com*e.

There was no other ritual that carried the same significance. If you are among the faithful, you do this, just as Abel did, and this will become true of you, *Luk 11:49 Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute: Luk 11:50 That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; Luk 11:51 From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation*.

Men follow the same paths, the path of Abel or the path of Cain, *Gen 4:9 And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: **Am I my brother's keeper***? Of course he knew where his brother was, but it was disingenuous to say, “Am I my brother's keeper”. He was not his brother’s keeper, but he was his brother’s brother! He had a duty of care for Abel, but he neglected this duty and instead pushed the problem away, “I know not”, and with that selfish comment consigns himself to Hell.

If you look at God’s plan for man it is quite simple. It was simple at the beginning and continues to be the same, “Will mankind accept Christ or not”? This theme continues to manifest itself throughout scripture. The elaborate manifestations, in the Tabernacle or Temple, the Candlestick for example, were not just items invented by the Lord at random. Each and every element said something about Christ and in looking to Him, through the object, one entered into that realm of the kingdom of heavens.

The whole of the Antediluvian period may be summed up by this simple conflict between two opposing sides, and in the end God had enough and was ready to end mankind, *Gen 6:3 And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. Gen 6:4 There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. Gen 6:5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. Gen 6:6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. Gen 6:7 And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing,*

and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. Gen 6:8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

Noah was the only one who found grace. Others rode on his coat tails, and we see what sort of persons they were.

9. Religious Services Post Flood

In the antediluvian times, Religion does not seem to be distinguished by cults and factions as it is today. It was very much a personal thing, what you thought God deserved. In antediluvian times (before the Flood), worship was direct, often involving walking with God (Enoch), calling on His name (Enosh), and potentially incorporating early music/crafts, but it declined into evil/idolatry. This was perhaps “everyman doing that which was right in his own eyes”.

With Noah's generations, as the sole exception, post-flood worship shifted significantly, focusing more on covenant, established laws (like capital punishment), the introduction of diverse gods/idols (as cultures scattered), and eventually formalized rituals (like in Israel), moving away from the original intimate, universal connection.

Yet even Noah himself could not change the people which came with him, through God’s judgement, into the new world. It is hard to see why God continued with a failed race of men. God knew that men would fail again and again, but this only brought into focus the inability of man to redeem himself and that salvation was entirely of the Lord. I think that this period of grace, was given by the Lord to burnish even brighter, the glories of Christ, *Psa 8:3 I often think of the heavens your hands have made, and of the moon and stars you put in place. Psa 8:4 Then I ask, "Why do you care about us humans? Why are you concerned for us weaklings?" Psa 8:5 You made us a little lower than you yourself, and you have crowned us with glory and honor. Psa 8:6 You let us rule everything your hands have made. And you put all of it under our power* CEV. Remember, all history is built around Christ, and life only has meaning only through Christ.

Through Christ, Noah was strengthened by faith, to build a vessel that would deliver his family, *Gen 6:9 These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God. Gen 6:10 And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Gen 6:11 The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. Gen 6:12 And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. Gen 6:13 And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I*

will destroy them with the earth. Gen 6:14 Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch.

The Ark of Noah was a strange contrivance. Outwardly it had all of the attributes of a life boat, spaces which could accommodate all forms of life, spaces for stores to feed the crew and animals during the period God was judging the earth. This was the outward, the earthly form of the Ark. Yet there was another attribute that was more heavenly, for the Ark was built according to an ancient pattern.

The measurements between the Ark of Noah, the Tabernacle, the Temple of Solomon, the Temple of Ezekiel and the Temple in Revelation, all show some commonalities. The three floors of the Ark I take to be of the same height, 10 cubits, the same height as the Tabernacle of Moses. You could fit three tabernacles per floor of the Ark. In the Temple Solomon built, it was as high as the Ark, three times the height of the Tabernacle, and twice as wide as the Tabernacle but the same length. 30 x 30 x 20 cubits. All these iterations of the Tabernacle were types of Christ.

The Ark of Noah was also a shadow of deliverance into the heavenly realm. There was the earthly deliverance through the flood which mirrored the heavenly deliverance through Christ. There was the deliverance through Moses which pointed to a heavenly deliverance, *Joh 3:14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: Joh 3:15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life*.

With the flood came a change in the pattern of worship. Gradually, religion became exclusive, that is, whereas all nations could serve the Lord initially, such as the Salemites, they gradually became excluded until there was one tribe as supreme, Israel. *Gen 14:17 And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale. Gen 14:18 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. Gen 14:19 And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: Gen 14:20 And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all*. Melchizedek was a priest king, but this was not allowed in later generations since he was not related to Israel.

With the separation of the Nations from Israel, came conflict, conflict between Israel and the rest of mankind. It was I suppose, a shadow of the Church being taken out of the world, fighting the world to maintain its loyalty to the Lord. Of course, *Rom 9:6 Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Rom 9:7 Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. Rom*

9:8 That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

There were amongst the Israelites some who were believers and some who were not, like the modern congregations. There are some “nominal” believers, people who embrace Christianity in a way which suits them, and true believers who follow the word of God. The nominal believer is convinced that he is right, and does not doubt his place in heaven, but in reality he has an earthly Christianity, which will take him to hell.

The Israelite, the true Israelite, is the one who follows the Lord, and he is the one who serves God in Spirit and truth. With this division in the nation of Israel, the way was prepared for “Pharisaism”. This had 6 attributes,

1. Pride - love of self-ease, self-adulation, and self-exaltation when praised as the straight-talking, gun-slinging, hard-hitting teacher of others when we refuse the same lessons and go easy on our own flesh, *Mat 23:1 Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, Mat 23:2 Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: Mat 23:3 All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. Mat 23:4 For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. Mat 23:5 But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, Mat 23:6 And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, Mat 23:7 And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi*.
2. Zeal - false addiction to tradition blinds us to our own plight, leads others into a ditch, and spreads its cancer far and wide.
3. Lies - covenants are our catchphrase but our oaths obfuscate on obedience: if our word is not our bond, and our vow is not made good, we show our ignorance of the God of truth in whose name we swear, *Mat 23:16 Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor! Mat 23:17 Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? Mat 23:18 And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. Mat 23:19 Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? Mat 23:20 Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon. Mat 23:21 And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein. Mat 23:22 And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.*
4. Bribes - wads of petty cash or cool, huge, I-phone bank transfers are turned into a ruse for not doing some significant good.

5. Filth - style and suits are employed to conceal inward dirt, while sanctimonious skins of psalm-singing are used to plaster over cracks of hidden, hedonistic, hellish, hankerings in our hearts.
6. Hate - fists, rants, spite and spit are launched against the truth or against shepherd-hearted friends who are brave and kind enough to correct us or call us back in line.

It wasn't long before Israel became a divided nation.

10. Direction of Expression (to God or Man)

Let me explain what I mean by "direction of expression", as regards worship. We may have thought that worship only had "God" in mind, and that might be so, a man might think he is worshipping the one true God. But if you compare God with god, there are a variety of god's and whose God is the real god and how do you determine that?

Furthermore, there is the complication, that some of the language that is used of God could equally be applied to man, for men equally demand worship for the god they make, *Dan 3:1 Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. Dan 3:2 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. Dan 3:3 Then the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. Dan 3:4 Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, Dan 3:5 That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up: Dan 3:6 And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. Dan 3:7 Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of musick,* ***all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up***.

Men will find a supreme “being” to worship, an idol of the heart. We also think that because the Lord does not stop us in our religious “careers”, that we are right. We take it that no response from the Lord is a sign of approval. Not so!

In the 1980’s, we as a church got into Christian counselling, and we approached it with zeal. We eventually thought that everybody was in need of counselling, everybody that is, except the elders, and that is the route we proceeded along. We were a bit like the witch finder general, raising the spectre of guilt where there was none, creating among some a suspicion of guilt. Of course this was going too far but the Lord never stopped it and we assumed we were right.

In the 1970’s there were the Pentecostals that believed that you were not a complete Christian unless you had received the gift of tongues. You were a second class Christian unless you had received “tongues” and they made it something you should try for. Christians were urged to mumble away, speak gobbledygook, to utter rubbish in the hope that people would say that you had got the “gift”. God never intervened but remained silent. He did not comment on this fad.

The Exclusive Brethren had some strange rules, and growing up in the Exclusive Brethren meant missing out on a lot of things other children took for granted. It meant no TV, radio or recorded music, no pets, parties, school outings, plays or sports, no cinema, novels, magazines, no make-up or haircuts, and strict clothing rules. It is perhaps alright for an individual to take upon themselves these privations, but where do you get them imposed upon you? *Num 6:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Num 6:2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When either man or woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate themselves unto the LORD: Num 6:3 He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried. Num 6:4 All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine tree, from the kernels even to the husk*.

An individual took a voluntary act, took a promise to God, to follow a particular path, he did not vow to undertake it for someone else. Yet in this also, the Lord is silent as to the rights and wrongs of this situation with the Brethren.

Why doesn’t the Lord intervene? We could see this as a proof of the falsehood of Judaism and Christianity. People say a lot, they speak for this “God”, they make claims for Him (which He never made), they give rules which He didn’t, and all the while this “God” remains silent as to what is said. Where is your God? Surely it is proof God does not exist?

But that is not proof, especially if you have been told what you are to do. All men have the word of God, **written in the heavens**, *Psa 97:5 The hills melted like wax at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the Lord of the whole*

earth. Psa 97:6 The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory.....**written in the earth**,

Psa 19:1 To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Psa 19:2 Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. Psa 19:3 There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.....**and in the written word**,

Psa 119:9 BETH. Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. Psa 119:10 With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. Psa 119:11 Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

The Christian makes whole hearted search for God's truth, "*by taking heed thereto according to thy word. With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments".* He does not wait to be told by God, he does not guess at what God wants, he does not presume and speak for God, he makes sure that he has reasons for what he believes founded in the truth of God's word. In all of this God remains silent, after all men know what God wants them to do.

So we started this talk with the thought that "a man might think he is worshipping the one true God, but if you compare God with God, there are a variety of God's and whose God is the real God and how do you determine that?" We have determined that God has defined Himself in His works. He is what He says He is and that is enough. We have no right to add to His word.

This is at the root of Old Testament disobedience in worship.

11. Who is Involved in the Assembly?

This is not a trick question and it requires a lot of thought to answer, especially considering the denominational background you have aligned with.

The first-generation Christian church was a **dynamic, counter-cultural community** that grew rapidly, characterized by its Jewish roots, communal lifestyle, powerful sense of the Holy Spirit, and the absence of formal church buildings or a distinct clergy-laity division. **(***A* ***counter-cultural community*** is a group that rejects mainstream societal norms, values, and practices, actively opposing them to create an alternative lifestyle or social order, often driven by a desire for nonconformity, social change, or a different way of life, like the 1960s

hippies or contemporary intentional communities focused on sustainability or spiritual beliefs. Unlike subcultures that blend in, countercultures aim to challenge and transform the dominant culture through alternative ideologies, politics, art, and lifestyles, fostering diversity and pushing societal boundaries**).**

The earliest Christians initially saw themselves as a Jewish sect, continuing to worship in the Temple and synagogues while also gathering separately on the Lord's Day (Sunday) for a communion meal. They were united by the core belief that Jesus was the resurrected Messiah and Son of God.

Meetings primarily took place in private homes (house churches) as there were no dedicated church buildings for decades. Services were simple, adapting elements of Jewish synagogue worship (reading of scriptures, prayers, singing of psalms, homilies **-** a religious talk which is intended primarily for spiritual **edification** rather than **doctrinal instruction**) and centred around "the breaking of bread" (Eucharist/Lord's Supper) and prayer. Worship often included spontaneous elements and the exercise of spiritual gifts, such as prophecy and speaking in tongues, which were regulated for order.

The community was known for its deep fellowship, love, and radical generosity. Believers shared resources, sold property to provide for those in need, and cared for the poor, widows, and orphans within and outside their community. This unity crossed traditional social, ethnic, and economic boundaries, which was a startling contrast to the surrounding Roman society.

Authority initially lay with the apostles and the kinsmen of Jesus (like James, his brother). As the church grew, a two-fold leadership system of elders (also called bishops or presbyters) and deacons emerged, chosen based on character rather than purchase or social status. There was no single "super-star" personality, and all **leaders were expected to serve rather than rule**.

The church was highly evangelistic and grew exponentially, spreading throughout the Roman Empire. Christians often faced intense persecution for their refusal to worship Roman gods or the emperor, which was seen as a threat to social order. Their steadfastness and joy in the face of hardship were powerful missionary tools.

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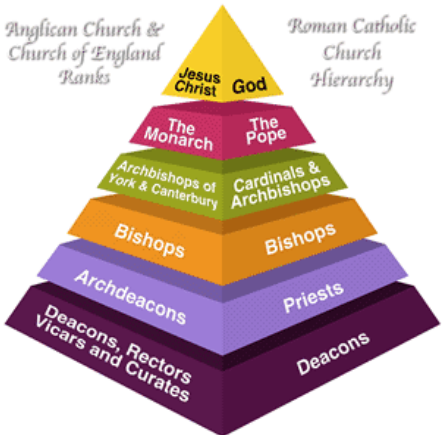

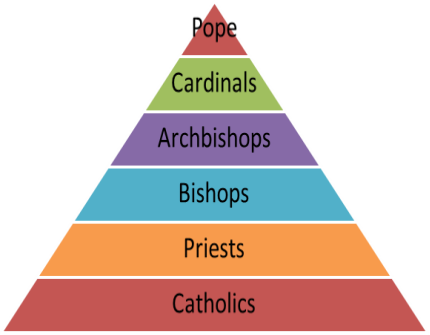

A denominational hierarchy is the structured system of leadership and authority within a religious group, varying from highly centralized (like the Catholic Church with the Pope) to decentralised (some Protestant groups with congregational rule). Key structures include **Episcopal** (bishops, archbishops, like Anglicanism/ Orthodoxy), **Presbyterian** (elected elders / presbyters), and **Congregational** (local autonomy), with roles like Pope, Patriarch, Bishop, Priest, and Deacon defining ranks, all serving to uphold doctrine and order.

The order of worship had soon developed from a non-hierarchical system in the 1st and 2nd centuries, to an array of different hierarchical systems. The Anglican and Roman system show a difference in hierarchy and rule, which developed as part of their secular governance. From the time of King Constantine in the 3rd century, we see the secularisation of the church, and church leadership replaced with secular rule.

The rule of one monarchy changing to another occurred with the selfish divorce of Henry VIII, king of England. Henry VIII's Reformation was the break of the English Church from papal authority, initiated by his desire for a male heir and a divorce from Catherine of Aragon, which Pope Clement VII denied; Henry declared himself head of the Church of England (Act of Supremacy, 1534), seizing monastic wealth, but remained doctrinally Catholic, with true Protestantism developing under his children, Edward VI and Elizabeth I.

You can see in the diagrams provided that the hierarchical structure has inserted secular rule for ecclesiastical rule. The Anglican church must have the approval of the prime minister and monarch in selecting the Arch-Bishop of Canterbury. This seizure of the church by the secular authority marks the transition from heavenly leadership to earthly leadership.

The term “Bishop” is not an accurate translation and does not occur in the original, rather the term overseer or elder is preferred, translating **επισκοπης** as bishop, *1Ti 3:1 This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.* The word "bishop" originates from the Greek word epískopos (overseer/supervisor) and entered English via Latin (episcopus) and Old English (biscop), becoming an ecclesiastical title before evolving into an English surname for those resembling clergy.

The term elder come from **πρεσβύτερος**, *1Ti 5:1 Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren;* This form of government is also known as the Presbyterian, system.

In the Bible, an apostle (from Greek *apostolos*, αποστολους, "one who is sent") is a messenger or ambassador, primarily referring to the Twelve Disciples chosen by Jesus (like Peter, James, John) and Paul, who were commissioned to spread the Gospel and establish the early Church, serving as foundational witnesses to Jesus' resurrection and teachings. The term can also describe other early Christian missionaries, like Barnabas, sent on special missions.

There were also prophets, προφητας, evangelists, ευαγγελιστας, pastors, ποιμενας and teachers, διδασκαλους. These were skills or vocations which had one purpose, *Eph 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; Eph 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Eph 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*: They were given to edify believers so the they would become like Christ. If anyone is not serving this purpose, they have no calling.

You were not limited to one role but could be a many of these roles depending what task you had at the time. Paul takes the roles of Apostle, teacher, evangelist, and pastor, and he is all of these at various times.

12. Spread of Denominations

Protestantism includes several major sub-traditions, including:

- **Lutheranism:** Follows the theology of Martin Luther, focusing on justification by faith, high sacramental theology, and infant baptism.
- **Reformed/Calvinism:** Adheres to the doctrines of John Calvin, emphasizing God’s sovereignty, unconditional election, and a spiritual presence in the Lord's Table.
- **Anglican/Episcopalian:** A blend of Catholic-style hierarchy (bishops) and Protestant theology, often using the Book of Common Prayer.
- **Baptist:** Emphasizes believer’s baptism by full immersion, local church autonomy, and congregational governance.
- **Methodist:** Originating from John Wesley, it features Armenian theology (free will), an emphasis on sanctification and social activism.
- **Pentecostal/Charismatic:** Emphasizes the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit, including miraculous gifts like speaking in tongues, healing, and prophecy.
- **Anabaptist (Amish, Mennonites):** Emphasizes pacifism, separation from society, and believer's baptism.

These denominations may not form hierarchical churches, but they do form clusters of believers which may or may not develop a hierarchy. **Why do we get**

so many denominations? There are some common or core beliefs these groups hold and we would be wrong to say that they were at odds with each other. Some of the things they held in common were:

- God: One God existing as the Trinity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit).
- Jesus Christ: God's Son, both fully God and fully human, born of the Virgin Mary, who died for sins, rose from the dead, and will return.
- Holy Spirit: The third person of the Trinity, a divine being, not just a force.
- Salvation: Achieved through God's grace, received by faith in Jesus, involving repentance and regeneration by the Spirit.
- Scripture: The Bible (Old & New Testaments) is God's Word, sufficient for faith and life, often seen as inerrant or infallible.

What doctrines separate us? Let us take a look and come up with some major differences. Firstly where groups differ from each other is in the teaching about Jesus. Just as one example I cite Marcion.

Marcion of Sinope c. 85 – c. 160 was a theologian in early Christianity. Marcion of Sinope was a theologian in early Christianity. Marcion preached that God had sent Jesus Christ, who was distinct from the "vengeful" God (Demiurge) who had created the world. Marcion considered himself a follower of Paul the Apostle, whom he believed to have been the only true apostle of Jesus Christ; his doctrine is called **Marcionism**. Marcion published the earliest record of a canon of New Testament books

Early Church writers such as Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Tertullian denounced Marcion as a heretic or antichrist, and he was excommunicated by the Church of Rome around 144. He published his own canon of Christian sacred scriptures, which contained ten Pauline epistles (including the Epistle to the Laodiceans, while excluding the Pastoral epistles) and the Gospel of Marcion which historically is claimed to be an edited version of the Gospel of Luke. Some modern scholars, such as Matthias Klinghardt, have theorized that Marcion's Gospel was the oldest, although this has been contested. **This made Marcionism a catalyst in the process of the development of the New Testament canon by forcing the proto-orthodox Church to respond to his canon.**

Marcion preached that God had sent Jesus Christ, who was distinct from the "vengeful" God (Demiurge) who had created the world. He considered himself a follower of Paul the Apostle, whom he believed to have been the only true apostle of Jesus Christ; his doctrine is called Marcionism. Marcion published the earliest record of a canon of New Testament books.

This made Marcionism a catalyst in the process of the development of the New Testament canon by forcing the proto-orthodox Church to respond to his canon. Study of the Hebrew Bible, along with received writings circulating in the nascent Church, led Marcion to conclude that many of the teachings of Jesus were

incompatible with the actions of Yahweh, characterized as the belligerent god of the Hebrew Bible. Marcion responded by developing a ditheistic system of belief around the year 144. This notion of two gods—a higher transcendent one and a lower world-creator and ruler—allowed Marcion to reconcile his perceived contradictions between Christian Covenant theology and the gospel proclaimed by the New Testament.

In contrast to other leaders of the nascent Christian Church, however, Marcion declared that Christianity was in complete discontinuity with Judaism and entirely opposed to the scriptures of Judaism. Marcion did not claim that these were false. Instead, he asserted that they were entirely true, but were to be read in an absolutely literalistic manner, one which led him to develop an understanding that Yahweh was not the same God spoken of by Jesus. For example, Marcion argued that the Genesis account of Yahweh walking through the Garden of Eden asking where Adam was, proved that Yahweh inhabited a physical body and was without universal knowledge, attributes wholly incompatible with the Heavenly Father professed by Jesus.

According to Marcion, the God of the Old Testament, whom he called the Demiurge, the creator of the material universe, is a jealous tribal deity of the Jews, whose law represents legalistic reciprocal justice and who punishes mankind for its sins through suffering and death. In contrast, the God that Jesus professed is an altogether different being, a universal God of compassion and love who looks upon humanity with benevolence and mercy. Marcion also produced a book titled Antitheses, which is no longer extant, contrasting the Demiurge of the Old Testament with the Heavenly Father of the New Testament.

Marcion held Jesus to be the son of the Heavenly Father but understood the incarnation in a docetic manner, i.e. that **Jesus' body was only an imitation of a material body, and consequently denied Jesus' physical and bodily birth, death, and resurrection**.

Marcion was the first to codify a Christian canon. His canon consisted of only eleven books, grouped into two sections: the Evangelikon, a shorter version of the Gospel of Luke, and the Apostolikon, a selection of ten epistles of Paul the Apostle, which were also slightly shorter than the canonical text. Early Christians such as Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Epiphanius claimed that Marcion's editions of Luke and the Pauline epistles were intentionally edited by Marcion to match his theological views, and many modern scholars agree. However, some scholars argue that Marcion's texts were not substantially edited by him, and may in some respects represent an earlier version of these texts than the canonical versions. Like the Gospel of Mark, the gospel used by Marcion did not contain elements relating to Jesus’ birth and childhood. Interestingly, it did contain some Jewish elements, and material that challenged Marcion's ditheism—a fact that was utilized by early Christians in their articulations against Marcion.

The centrality of the Pauline epistles in Marcion's canon reflects the fact that Marcion considered Paul to be the correct interpreter and transmitter of Jesus' teachings, in contrast to the Twelve Disciples and the early Jerusalem church. In Marcion's view, the other apostles were under the auspices of the Demiurge. Marcion is sometimes described as a Gnostic philosopher. In some essential respects, Marcion proposed ideas which aligned well with Gnostic thought. Like the Gnostics, he believed that this world was not the creation of the one true God.

However, Marcionism conceptualizes God in a way which cannot be reconciled with broader Gnostic thought. For Gnostics, some human beings are born with a small piece of God's soul lodged within their spirit (akin to the notion of a Divine Spark). God is thus intimately connected to and part of his creation. Salvation lies in turning away from the physical world (which Gnostics regard as an illusion) and embracing the godlike qualities within oneself. Marcion, by contrast, held that the Heavenly Father (the father of Jesus Christ) was an utterly alien God; he had no part in making the world, nor any connection with it. According to Bart Ehrman: "Marcion himself should not be thought of as a Gnostic; he held that there were only two gods, not many; he did not think of this world as a cosmic disaster, but as the creation of the Old Testament God; and he did not think divine sparks resided in human bodies that could be set free by understanding the true 'gnosis.' Moreover, his docetic view does not appear to have been the typical view of Gnostics."

I came across Marcion, when I heard a statement on Christ from the Jehovah's Witnesses, *Luk 24:39 See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; touch me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones just as you see that I have." And as he said this, he showed them his hands and his feet*. New World Translation. The Jehovah's Witnesses were following the old Marcionite teaching.

It is surprising that factions developed so quickly, less than one hundred years after the death of Christ. It says something about how quickly the doctrines of the church developed and how soon people were polarised. Yet Jesus does not intervene to stamp His authority over His church!

13. Heresies

Αἵρεσις = hairesis means properly a choice, that is, (specifically) a party*, Act 24:14 But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which* ***they call heresy, so worship I the God*** *of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets: Act 24:15 And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.* Paul admits that he is a heretic, and we should not make it into a term of contempt, because in Paul's day it was not. It has only become that in more modern times.

Today, heresy is a belief, doctrine, or opinion that strongly contradicts the established or orthodox tenets of a religious organization or official theory, essentially choosing a path contrary to accepted dogma. A person holding such views is a "heretic," and historically, this has involved challenging core principles like the Trinity, the nature of Christ, or salvation through sacraments, leading to conflict, debate, or punishment, although the term is also used more broadly for any radical, unconventional idea.

Religious Context: Most commonly refers to beliefs opposing fundamental Christian doctrines (e.g., divinity of Jesus, role of the Church).

Contradicts Authority: It's defined by those in power as a denial of revealed truth or established doctrine. In essence, heresy is about deviation from the accepted norm, particularly in matters of deep belief or authority, often seen as a threat to the spiritual or ideological body.

The heresies or choices that men made concerning the Christian religion are many. Among these was the choice of teachers. This choice was based upon the predisposition of the listeners, *2Ti 4:3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 2Ti 4:4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables……. 2Pe 2:1 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. 2Pe 2:2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of*.

I don’t think that all heretics were deliberately trying to be contentious or evil. I think that they let their intellect run away with them and went from fact to speculation. Marcion is just one such person who may have had no ulterior motive to mislead the church.

Some people were strong characters and swayed the people, trying to persuade them of their teaching, but it is not certain that all of the people understood or believed the teaching. Like many today, people go along with a teaching without understanding it. The first church I was welcomed at after becoming a believer, had as an article of faith, “the Pre-millennial second coming of Christ”. Just why this doctrine was singled out over others I do not know, but I doubt whether many could explain it.

Most churches have articles of faith. They are the distinctives that the group holds, a key list of beliefs which sets out their stall, so to speak. It is an attempt to correct unorthodox teaching, *1Co 15:3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the*

scriptures; 1Co 15:4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: 1Co 15:5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: 1Co 15:6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. 1Co 15:7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. 1Co 15:8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

What should a creed contain? I think that because Christianity is about Jesus Christ, the belief, the creed, should be about Christ. Issues that are speculative, which do not have solid biblical support, are not issues that should divide us. Statements about Jesus are what creeds are about, *Php 2:6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: Php 2:7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: Php 2:8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Php 2:9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: Php 2:10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; Php 2:11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*.

Early church heresies were diverse deviations from orthodox Christian teaching, primarily challenging the nature of Christ (like Gnosticism, Arianism, Docetism) or core doctrines such as salvation (Pelagianism) or the validity of scripture (Marcionism), often sparking crucial councils and writings that helped define mainstream Christianity, with major movements including Gnosticism (spirit vs. matter), Arianism (Jesus as created), and Montanism (prophetic revival).

The Major Early Heresies were:
Gnosticism: This believed matter was evil, the physical world created by a lesser god (Demiurge), and salvation came through secret knowledge (gnosis).
Marcionism: This rejected the Old Testament and the Creator God, viewing Jesus as a spiritual being sent by a different, benevolent God.
Arianism: This denied Jesus' full divinity, teaching he was a created being, subordinate to God the Father, a major debate settled at the Council of Nicaea. This belief is held by the Jehovah’s Witnesses.
Docetism: This claimed Jesus only appeared human, his body being a phantom, as physical reality was seen as evil.
Montanism: Was a prophetic movement emphasizing ecstatic prophecy and strict asceticism, seen as an over-emphasis on the Spirit's immediate guidance.
Modalism (Sabellianism): This taught the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were just different "modes" or masks of one single divine person, not distinct persons.
Ebionism: These were Jewish-Christian group viewing Jesus as a prophet adopted by God, not divine from birth, and requiring Mosaic Law observance.
Pelagianism: Argued humans could achieve salvation through their own free will and effort, without special divine grace. This is the view of Wesleyans.

Donatism: This was a schismatic movement focused on the purity of clergy, believing sacraments administered by "unworthy" (e.g., lapsed during persecution) priests were invalid. The Anglicans hold similar views.
The heresies all sprung up in the early centuries of Christianity. The differences in the faith are marked by certain beliefs. Orthodoxy did not come automatically!

Impact of Heresies
They accelerated the Canon Formation, the “rule of scripture”. Disputes over Gnosticism and Marcionism helped solidify the New Testament canon by setting out the agreed position.
Creeds: Debates over Arianism led to the Nicene Creed, defining orthodox Trinitarian doctrine. *We believe in one God, the Father, the almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father.*

Defining Orthodoxy: Early Church Fathers like Irenaeus systematically refuted heresies, clarifying core beliefs about Christ's dual nature (fully God, fully man) and the one true God.

Paul saw that although heresies were divisive, they served a purpose, *1Co 11:17 Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. 1Co 11:18 For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. 1Co 11:19 For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.* They showed who were the leaders, for good or evil.

14. The Rise of the “Performance”

When we get married, we could probably get all our possessions in one suitcase. The house we possess is empty, and we rattle around in it, but fast forward a few years and it is filling up with memorabilia that define our lives and are personal to us. When we approach the end of our odyssey, it is crammed with possessions and in need of decluttering. We look around for neighbours who will take them off of our hands, for hospices and charity shops, and that is why so much junk fills their shelves. The “junk” contains some of our history but it is not understood by everybody outside of our circle. Churches are a bit like that, they start off relatively simply, but the clutter grows.

Church ornaments—referring to the furniture, vessels, pictures, and decorations used in Christian worship—evolved from simple, symbolic early Christian items, into elaborate displays, often mirroring shifts in architectural styles and societal

values over 2,000 years. Early decorations often involved Bible verses on walls, mosaics, and, from the 4th century, pictures of saints.

- **Early Christianity (pre-4th Century):** Due to persecution, early Christians used subtle symbols for identification and worship, such as the fish, dove, and anchors.
- **Constantine and Later (4th Century onwards):** Following the Edict of Milan, churches became more ornate, adopting gilding and mosaics.
- **Medieval Period (c. 1066–1530):** Ornaments became more complex, including gargoyles for functional water drainage and artistic decoration. This period saw the rise of detailed, symbolic wood carvings on seats (representing vices or virtues).
- **Reformation (16th Century):** Many churches in the Reformed tradition stripped away many traditional ornaments.
- **Modern Era (19th Century–Present):** A revival of earlier styles often occurred, alongside new traditions like the "Chrismon tree" (introduced in 1957), which uses white and gold symbols (crosses, monograms) to represent Biblical themes.

How Ornaments "Grew" (Evolutionary Factors):

- **Functional Needs:** Gargoyles were created to direct water away from walls.
- **Educational Purposes:** In the Middle Ages, decorations like the "Paradise Tree" (a precursor to the Christmas tree, decorated with apples) were used to teach Bible stories to illiterate worshippers.
- **Cultural Exchange:** Early church, especially in the East, adopted local traditions and styles, leading to diverse, regional, and sometimes, artistic, expressions.
- **Symbolic Meaning:** Many items evolved from practical, everyday items into highly symbolic objects, such as the evolution of the processional cross into the altar cross.
- **The Influence of Commemoration:** Memorials grew in popularity, starting with simple, recumbent, or "sleeping" figures, and becoming more detailed and ornate as more people could afford them, with wall monuments becoming common in the 16th century.

Common Types of Church Ornaments:

- **Liturgical Vessels:** Chalices, patens, and other items used in the Eucharist.
- **Textiles:** Linen for vessels, such as corporals and palls.
- **Symbolic Figures:** Statues, paintings, and, in some traditions, carvings of saints and martyrs.
- **Architectural Features:** Stained glass, particularly common in 13th-century churches.
- **Modern Devotional Items:** "Chrismons" (short for "Christ monograms"), which are white and gold, often handmade, symbols.